

SHSC 2023 Human Services Candidate Questionnaire

Seattle Human Services Coalition (SHSC) 2023 Candidate Questions

Email *

isabelle@kernerforcouncil.com

What is your name? *

Isabelle Kerner

For which position are you running? *

Seattle City Council District 1

Seattle City Council District 2

Seattle City Council District 3

Seattle City Council District 4

Seattle City Council District 5

Seattle City Council District 6

Seattle City Council District 7

King County Council District 2

King County Council District 4

King County Council District 6

King County Council District 8

Other:

What is your understanding of Human Services? Which Human Service Providers are most familiar with? *

I am most familiar with Catholic Community Services, Mary's Place, Jackson Day Center, the Compass Center, Union Gospel Mission, UpLife, REST, and REACH.
.....

What do you think is the root cause of poverty? What do you think the role of Government has in addressing institutionalized poverty? *

I think that the root cause of poverty is inequalities in income distribution and access to productive resources, basic social services, real opportunities and in some areas public corruption. I think sometimes the Government is part of the problem when it comes to institutionalized poverty.
.....

What is your understanding of racism and its impacts? What do you see as your role in addressing systemic racism? What solutions, ideas, or examples of policies would you offer toward ending the impact of racism and racial injustice? *

I think at this point we can just call it prejudice. I believe all people are human and should therefore be treated equally and fairly. I understand at the same time, not all people know the same standard of treatment. I would suggest that people increase their experiences with as many different and diverse groups as possible-- even if they are at first uncomfortable or unfamiliar with them.

As an elected official, what steps would you take to understand community needs? What is your approach to partnerships between communities and government? *

I believe the government should be part of the community. I think in Seattle--especially District 7 there is a lot of community development that needs to be done.

What do you believe are the root causes of the on-going homelessness crisis? *

Drug Addiction, Mental Illness, Public Corruption, Greed.

What would you say are some examples of metrics of success when it comes to the homelessness crisis? *

I would use the metrics of quality of life, happiness, and long term procurement of treatment, jobs, housing, and support systems or peer networks.

Survivors of domestic and sexual violence frequently enter the criminal legal system due to their victimization, but criminal legal responses are problematic for most survivors for a variety of reasons. This is especially true for Black, Indigenous, and other survivors of color, refugee and immigrant survivors, and gender non-conforming survivors. What do you see as the role of the criminal legal system in responding to gender-based violence? Do you know of any community-based alternatives to responding to violence and how you would promote or support them? *

I do not feel comfortable answering this question for personal reasons because I don't think the word 'victim' is very conducive to support. I do not know of any community based alternatives but would support free support groups for survivors of domestic or other violence and trauma.

At least one-quarter to one-third of people in our community will experience gender-based violence in their lifetimes, yet solutions and responses to domestic violence, sexual assault, and trafficking are significantly under-funded. Given this, what specific solutions would you bring forward to address this systemic shortfall? *

I would like to have actual survivor advocates that are not connected to the Prosecutor. I would support funding civil attorneys for protection orders and more funding for other private groups that have no conflicting interest associated with the situation, especially if criminal charges are brought.

According to the GAO nearly half of all people over 55+ and approaching retirement have no retirement savings. When individuals begin to think about retirement, approximately 50% of them will have to depend solely on Social Security as they have no pensions. This is a big factor in the reason that more older adults continue working past expected retirement. What are some of your priorities in tackling elder poverty and ensuring that our older adults are taken care of? What are some actions elected officials can take to help prevent poverty for older adults? *

I believe that we could do a better job educating other generations about the importance of long-term money management.

What do you consider as some of the priorities for older adults living in the Seattle/King County areas? *

Public Safety, Disability Rights, Access, Quality Healthcare and Affordability.

City officials and nonprofit leaders agree that wages for human service workers do not reflect the education required, difficulty, or value of their work to build well-being. A 2022 City of Seattle funded study conducted by the University of Washington School of Social Work found that King County human service workers are paid at least 37 percent less than workers with comparable skill sets in other industries. The report provides several evidence-based recommendations that the City of Seattle can implement now to begin closing the gap. *

The primary near-term recommendation in the report is an immediate seven percent increase to all City of Seattle funded human service contracts. This represents the minimum level of investment needed in the short term to address high rates of turnover and align human service worker pay with the rest of the labor market.

Will you support and prioritize funding for a seven percent increase in city-funded human service contracts to address systemic wage inequity?

I am not sure. I would have to analyze the study design and results.

Over the next few years, the City of Seattle will have an opportunity to build on these investments and support the substantial wage increases recommended by this report. We call on City leaders to work in concert with other public and private funders to identify the revenue necessary to pay the full cost of providing essential, lifesaving human services to all Seattle residents. *

Will you commit to partnering with SHSC and other human service funders to secure the additional revenue necessary to close the 37 percent wage gap that human service workers face?

This depends on the effectiveness. I think there are some alternative interests that need to be at least investigated or audited.

Many childcare workers struggle to afford childcare. Childcare workers in our coalition hesitate *
to accept promotions because they are concerned that higher pay might disqualify them from
receiving a childcare subsidy that they themselves rely on. This is causing quality childcare
providers to leave the profession altogether. In a recent survey of former King County childcare
workers, one of the main reasons cited for leaving the field was the need to provide affordable
childcare to their own children. A lack of access to affordable childcare has ironically created a
shortage of qualified early learning professionals. What solutions would you offer to make
childcare more affordable and incentivize childcare worker retention?

More subsidized child care for those within a certain income bracket and more tax credits.
.....

What are some ways that you would work to increase support available to folks struggling with *
mental health needs?

I would lead by example.
.....

Food banks and free meal providers in the region have always struggled to meet the needs of *
the public. During the pandemic there was an increase in resources to local food banks. As the
pandemic has waned, the resources are also receding, yet the demand for food bank services
has increased, especially with cuts to SNAP benefits and inflation. What solutions would you
offer to continue to meet the needs of people struggling with food insecurity and ensuring that
neighborhoods across the City of Seattle have equitable access to the healthy, culturally familiar
food? How do you ensure reliable food support is available despite a much-varied landscape of
hunger relief organizations and mutual aid groups?

I think there should be more cohesion between groups and also more work to ensure that SNAP benefits are
not being abused or traded for illegal materials or other 'services'.
.....

This content is neither created nor endorsed by Google.

Google Forms